



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/1056
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

Title:

Press release: Major Welfare Reorganisation

Please acknowledge the source as:
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/1056

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

PRESS RELEASE FROM MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND ABORIGINAL
AFFAIRS, HON. L.J. KING, Q.C.

20/3/71.

Major Welfare Reorganisation.

Far reaching changes in the scope and administration of welfare services in South Australia were today announced by the Minister of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. King.

The changes - approved by Cabinet - are the result of a six-months review of the operations of the new amalgamated Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs Departments.

The Department itself will be restyled the Department for Community Welfare to reflect the emphasis that will be given to providing decentralised, community-centred services, Mr. King said.

He said the reorganisation was based on four key points:

- . Maximum possible decentralisation and delegation of authority:
- . Professionalisation of staff through intensive in-service training and tertiary study:
- . Use of volunteers and voluntary organisations:
- . Use of expert panels and local advisory councils.

The Department itself will operate at three levels, the Adelaide head office, regional offices and community welfare centres.

Regional offices will control field offices in the area and will also be responsible for surrounding Aboriginal reserves.

The community welfare centres will be the principal point of contact with the public and the base of the Department's field operations. They will be a development of existing district offices and will be staffed by trained social workers.

Mr. King said that in order to ensure that the resources available within S.A. were utilised to the maximum possible extent, it was planned to set up specialist groups within the Department, operating from head office.

Among these will be:

- . An Aboriginal Task Force, made up of selected Aborigines who will be given special training in community development, and who will work particularly among Aboriginal groups and communities.
- . Timing of the implementation of this plan will depend on availability of Commonwealth finance.
- . An Aboriginal Resources Branch, comprising expert officials responsible for policy recommendations to provide special resources for the benefit of the Aboriginal people.

- . A Community Development Unit, composed of skilled consultants working on long term programmes aimed at improving community organisations and assets.
- . A Treatment Services Unit with prime responsibility for the treatment of disturbed and anti-social children and youths;
- . A Volunteer Programme, under which experienced and mature people, given special training, will work with professional social workers.
- . Consultative Panels to study special welfare issues and advise the Minister on them.

"The State Government's overall policy in the field of social welfare and Aboriginal Affairs is based on a recognition that every South Australian has the right to live at a reasonable standard and to feel a respected individual in the community.

"Our welfare policies must avoid any connotation of 'paternalism' or 'charity' and must be free of all discrimination", Mr. King said.

"They must be firmly based on the principle of preserving and promoting the family as the basic unit of society and upon a recognition of the family as the means of preventing the most common social welfare problems."

The Minister said the programme of reorganisation he had outlined would provide the broad framework for future action to be implemented as funds and personnel become available.

Some parts could - and would - be implemented almost immediately while others will be dependent on the availability of the necessary human and financial resources.

"One of the major problems we face is the shortage of properly qualified social workers.

"The Department itself, through in-service training and other schemes, hopes to make a contribution towards overcoming this, but it is not a problem that can be solved overnight.

"I hope, however, that publication of our plans for reference in this critical area of human need will stimulate enthusiasm in the community for a community attack on the welfare problems which have so long been neglected."